This economic picture indicates that from early childhood, women had engaged in such physical labor that by 18 years of age they had strong muscles and backs through lifting, stooping, and squatting. Since to stop work during pregnancy was construed as laziness, women worked vigorously up to the day of delivery. If a woman were delivered during one of the hectic seasons, she might shorten her post-natal rest to whatever she thought was a safe minimum.

462 147 843 846

Marriage

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As people of the community often met at the temple, at ceremonies, and at work parties, there too young people met. Unmarried girls went freely and often alone on duties about the community, and also to Minburi to sell vegetables or take a load of paddy to the mill. To temple fairs and such they went in groups. Though parents hoped their children would marry within the community, a few young people "married out."

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Girls were married between 17 and 27 or so, most frequently around 21 to 23. Since boys at 21 might have to serve 2 years in the army, and were urged to spend as well at least a few months in the priesthood, their marriages took place between 22 and 30, most often around 24 or so. Parents were in no hurry to marry off their grown children at the very age when their productivity was funneling wealth back into the family. However, if male help in the family were short, parents were more receptive to suitors. No girl was married against her wishes nor to a stranger.[4] Marriages might be arranged through formal conversations opened by the man's family and carried on through a go-between, but the girl had the final say. A secret agreement between the partners might even precede negotiations. About half of the marriages were elopements, sometimes arranged because negotiations were dragging, sometimes to avoid the higher costs of more formal arrangements. Marriage, though largely based on socio-economic factors (Phillips:62) was not devoid of personal esteem. Sharp (Bang Chan data at Cornell) has a note on the desirable qualities in a husband as viewed by women. "Sexual virility," last on the list, was minimized in relation to such qualities as "religiousness," "wealth," "industriousness," which headed the list.

[702] [793]

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4. A person who uses magical means to force an unwilling woman's love "will be born 500 times as a mad dog."

[832] [715]

Within the community all women received about the same service. Though the poor felt the 20 to 30 baht cost[5] of a midwife was too expensive, and so utilized the free help of a compassionate kinsman (usually the mother) or neighbor, the latter sometimes were as expert manually as a midwife or even on their way to becoming one. The few critical cases, rich or poor, who were taken to the Minburi Health Center managed to pay the 50 to 70 baht fee (120 baht if penicillin were used).

General Attitudes Towards Having Children

In these farm families, children were an asset, for their help, skills, and earnings enriched the family. Boys and girls were equally desired. A girl did household chores and at her marriage brought in the considerable payment of "milk money." A boy could be ordained and so "bring merit" to his parents. Both could farm, and both would provide cherishing care to the parents in their old age, but this was expected particularly of daughters. A child usually arrived within a year or so of marriage, to the rejoicing of everyone. Until the birth of a child, marriage only partially changed the young couple's status, especially if they were still living under the parental roof. With children they became the heads of a family, with authority over, and responsibility for, a younger generation. In the few polygynous households, the position of a younger wife was enhanced when she bore a child. Sometimes on the birth of this or another child, the money paid to the bride's parents at the time of the wedding was turned over to the new mother. Title to some of the familial land, never given until a marriage had proved stable, might be conveyed to one spouse or the other. The arrival of a child was sometimes a signal for preparations for moving out and establishing an independent household, or for establishing a "second kitchen," i.e. two separate families living under a single roof. A study of the birth-rituals (Chap. V) gives evidence that the arrival of a child, especially the first, was of deep psychological and social significance to the parents. The marriage bonds were strengthened if the first-born were male (cf. p. 65). A couple without children was "sad" and "a little less rich." Barrenness was caused by lack of merit.

5. Analysis of Janlekha's figures, borne out in observation, shows that per capita income was low, that there were many poor people, and because of the seasonal nature of income, even the rich were short of cash (1955:135-143). Ninety-two baht were the average "expenses for medicine" including delivery fees (1955:142).

435 Some information as to the cost in baht of the larger
796 ceremonies held in 1954, and their scale, was obtained from
[124] the school teacher's diary. Examples follow:

[742] Ordination: Total cost 8,000, including food 1400, liquor 800. Guests contributed 4000.

[852] Top-knot tonsure: Total cost 1550, including new utensils 550; 6 priests fed; each priest given 12 baht; 12 (2)pin-(1)toos filled to take to the temple; 100 duck eggs donated, and 300 baht received from 30-40 guests.

[714] Cremation[1]: Total cost 40,000[2], including about 10,000 for food; 61 priests fed[3]. About 500 guests contributed 4377.

[875] Homage-to-the-teacher ritual:
A: Total cost 715, including food 565 and liquor 150; 40 tang (800 liters) fish and 3 tang Chinese noodles donated.
B: Total cost, 11,000[4].

[585] Wedding: A: Thai Buddhist: Total cost 5000. Guests gave 2300.
[583] B: Rite of forgiveness after elopement: a meal, with 5 bottles of liquor.
[184] C: Moslem: 2 buffalo slaughtered. 400 guests.

585 Arranged marriages could be large merit-making affairs,
262 with a huge procession from one house to the other of twenty-
four "pairs" of specified foods, i.e. two bearers each of
[583] sugar cane, fruits, sweetmeats and other things. At more modest weddings and the rite of forgiveness for a couple who had eloped, food might differ from the usual fare only by including the three essentials of a wedding: pork, chicken and alcohol.

273 Increased consumption of alcoholic beverages during the
796 ceremonial season was indicated by the sales of one local
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1. Cremation was the last of several rites at death. Private 7-day, 30-day and 100-day rites were held, when priests came to the home to chant and to be feasted.

2. With cooperative assistance from well-situated relatives in Bangkok.

3. The whole chapter of priests from Wat Bang Chan
[792] was always included at cremations, and often others from a
[374] distance.

4. See list of food purchased, Appendix A, pp. 102-103.

178 These five cases may be grouped as follows: two
592 cases of relatives of family heads separating from 'extended'
621 families, two cases of one spouse leaving the other, and one case of a family head deserting his wife and children.

Pattern of Establishment of New Families

593 Bangchan offspring customarily continued to live with
592 their parents as long as they were not married regardless of how old they might be. In the eyes of the parents, an offspring is always their child, immature and needing parental supervision, as long as he has not been able to acquire a spouse; and until then the parents-offspring mutual obligations, necessitating living together, must continue to exist. Thus, it was not uncommon to see several unmarried adults crowding in one family providing too large a labor force relative to a small parcel of land on which the family
[58] worked. In this context, marriage serves an important economic function of giving impetus to the start of new producing units in the village. There is no corresponding service in areas where the extended family system predominates such as in China and India.

• 583 Two distinct kinds of marriage were conceived of in Bangchan: the conventional marriage with the sanction of parents or guardians of both parties which was usually preceded by formal arrangement and accompanied by marriage rites sponsored by the bride's family; and the popular marriage by mutual understanding between the man and wife without

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bangchan

583 the sanction of parents or guardians of either party. The latter case took the form of elopement -- the man taking the woman away from her family usually during the night and returning for pardon (normally granted) a few days after-
587 ward. Another intermediate type of marriage was common among independent family heads, usually widows and widowers, in which case the man and woman simply came to live with each other. Marriage between widows and widowers who had been living in their respective families as dependent mem-
583 bers also took this simplified form. Finally there was also marriage by capture, one case of which was reported during 1949-53 when a daughter of a laboring family in BC4 was kidnapped by a group of men who were allegedly helping a friend of theirs take the woman as his wife. Although this dramatic kind of marriage by capture was often spoken of, actually it rarely happened in the village. Even in the single case just mentioned, there was doubt on the part of fellow villagers that the victim was really ignorant of the plan.

583 In our records of major expenses of 96 families of
585 farm operators[8] during the period from 1949 to 1953, three
435 families reported expenses for conventional marriages. These expenses were for 1700, 6200, 7500 and 7500 baht for four sons which were dowries, in gold and cash. They were handed over to the brides' parents on the wedding day. Another family reported an expense of 5,300 baht for the marriage

8. See Chapter 6 as to how sampling for these 96 families was done.

583 of their adopted daughter, of which some 300 baht went to
575 bedding materials and 5,000 baht to the wedding feast which
435 the bride's parents alone were supposed to give. It should be noted, however, that in this last case the bride's parents received as dowry from the bridegroom's parents 4,000 baht in cash and two baht[9] weight of gold worth about a thousand baht, and they also received from the guests an aggregate customary contribution of 2,360 baht. Thus, the bride's parents came out with a net gain of 1,080 baht plus the gold which was to be given to the bride.

593 While the conventional marriage was somewhat costly especially for the bridegroom's party, the popular marriage by elopement was much less expensive. Our records show that in addition to nominal ceremonial materials of white cloth, candles and incense, the bridegroom had to pay a fine of only a few hundred baht to his wife's parents when the couple came to receive formal forgiveness from them.

We do not have comparative figures for the occurrence of conventional marriage and elopement, but the latter appeared very frequently in our daily field notes as against very few cases of the former.

591 There are two types of establishment of new families
184 after marriage: (a) immediately after marriage, and (b) some years after staying with parents of either party.

It was observed that immediate establishment of new families after marriage was common among couples originating from farm laboring families and families of poor farm operators.

[804] 9. One baht weight is equivalent to fifteen grams.